

PLAYS OF THE WEEK

The Black Crook and Spider and Fly Spectacles.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

Amazons, Marches, Gorgeous Ballets and Scenic Effects Galore—Charles Frohman's Comedians.

From a box office standpoint the past week has been a dismal dramatic failure. The attractions, in the main, have been above the average, and patronage below it. One of the greatest, if not the greatest, violinists played to a bumpy audience in Lockerby hall Thursday night for the simple reason that amusement lovers ignored him, either through indifference or ignorance. And M. Marteau in the fashion, more so than Padreswaki. In the Powers Monday and Tuesday evenings local talent was heard in "Jocantha," and business was fairly good. Friday night, in the same house, "McCarthy's Mischief" had bad business, which was to be expected. Light houses were the rule in "The Grand Revue," "The Tornado," the best seasonal scenic melodrama ever seen here, in vaudeville line "The London Belles" had a disappointing week of it. Some of the best attractions on the road are offered for the coming week and it is to be seen whether business will improve or not. Below are the bookings of the various houses.

Lady Windermere's Fan—Powers.

Saturday night Charles Frohman's comedians will present in "The Powers" Oscar Wilde's great social comedy, "Lady Windermere's Fan." This latest effort of Mr. Wilde has created a sensation in both England and this country, being one of the wittiest plays ever produced—and, whisper it, a trifle naughty. The piece deals largely with society of today, against which the playwright has shot a quiver of arrows, of rapid-fire wit, piercing every plate of Madam Grundy's armor. The epigrams alone have made the drama famous. It has been said of Mr. Wilde that he regards life as a huge comedy; that he is essentially a nineteenth century production, did he not exist, it would be necessary to invent him. Laugh he will have at any cost. He has wit always, imperturbable audacity, and an inimitable turn for parody. One of his axioms is something like this: "Give me a clever talk on the stage, and your action may be what you will." It is just to say that Mr. Wilde's talk in "Lady Windermere's Fan" is diabolically clever. The drawing-room atmosphere of the comedy is greatly appreciated by the better element of theatre-goers. The third act in which Lord Windermere, Lord Darlington, and a number of men are setting a round in Darlington's room, sipping brandy and smoking cigarettes, while firing off rockets of wit and epigrams, makes an enjoyable twenty minutes as could be put into the play. Miss Virginia Harned gives an admirable performance of Mrs. Erlynne, the woman with a past, who believes her heart to be dead and finds it only asleep. Miss Evelyn Campbell also very effective as Lady Windermere. Both women dress gorgeously and their toilets create a sensation among the feminine contingent of theatre-goers. The piece is one of the best attractions of the year. Following is the complete cast:

Lord Windermere.....Frank Gilmore
Lord Darlington.....Howard Hanson
Lord Augustus Lorton.....J. G. Saville
Charles Darlington.....Herbert Ayling
Cecil Graham.....E. S. Ayles
Mr. Eppinger.....G. Marburg
Hopper, a broker.....H. Bennett
Mrs. Erlynne.....Virginia Harned
Lady Windermere.....Evelyn Campbell
The Duchess of Berwick.....Mrs. E. J. Phillips
Lady Fyndale.....Fanny Jackson
Lady Stoddard.....Anna Stannard
Mrs. Cowper-Corpe.....Marion Grey
Lady Jellicoe.....Mara Henderson
Lady Agatha.....Joseph Starr
Rosalie, a housemaid.....Rose Schuman

Spider and Fly—Grand.

M. B. Leavitt's entirely new and popular spectacular production, "Spider and Fly," will be presented at The Grand to night and all the week. This season's production is known as the second edition. The large cast was mostly recruited abroad, though several of last season's company have been retained. There are fifty people in the organization. "Spider and Fly," notwithstanding its numerous adjuncts, has a story to tell. Of course, the edifying plot is the foundation for a delightful evening's enjoyment, made up of marches, grotesque comedy, pantomime and specialty.

Since last season the play has been entirely re-written. Scarcely anything remains of the first text but the name. But in the new shape it contains more interest, humor and probabilities for the



ONE OF THE SCENES.

display of specialties, ballets, acrobatic costumes and superb scenery. All of latter have been supplied in superabundance. While partaking of many parts of the drama, "Spider and Fly" is good in all. Nothing on a small scale has been accepted from an artist's hands. No expense has been spared in the costume. Not a shabby or cheap looking thing is to be seen. The beautiful scenery is rendered prettier by a series of ingenious transformations. Scenic play, music, song, comedy in dancing, acrobatic, performance, illustrations. In the ballets are given rare illustrations of the poetry of motion. The scenic music is made up of solos, duets, trios, quartets and sextets. Nearly every scene is a kaleidoscope of beauty, varying from marches to ballets, from vaudeville to grotesque.

rich. This is the farewell tour of Spider and Fly.

Black Crook—Powers.

With the knowledge that "The Black Crook" will be seen in The Powers on Thursday and Friday nights and Friday matinee of this week, certain playgoers will run back a decade or more and they will remember the unholy joy, unholy in those days, they had on witnessing the spectacle. Old times dwell on "The Black Crook" as tenderly as on the life of a saint. Both were and still are excellent. Now that it has been revived making a run of a year in New York and months in Chicago it will be seen in Grand Rapids. Listen to the advance agent's description of its beauties: The company visiting this city, retaining the clearest and most talented artists of the New York revival, but with magnificent new costumes in the rarest fabrics, gorgeous original ballets, in which an army of beautiful girls take part, elaborate scenery and bright and catchy music, the present production will eclipse all previous attempts to place before the public a perfect show.



BLACK CROOK DANCERS.

Animated throng of clever dancers, attired with a masquerade, reflecting the richness of oriental costume, will form the most beautiful tableaux, and under the dazzling light of countless colored lights, the grand march will take place, headed by the beautiful Amazonian guards, the cleverest metropolitan artists will appear in the play, who will be assisted by specialty artists of European fame. Among the latter will be the famous Brothers Kixford, from the Cirque d'Eté, St. Petersburg, and the equally famous quartet of French quadrille dancers from the Paris, Folies Bergères, whose remarkable dancing, and agile movements, have created everywhere the wildest enthusiasm.

Smith's—Vaudeville.

Combinations will not be seen in this cozy place of amusement for several weeks to come. Manager Smith returning, with the show which opens tonight, to a straight variety performance. The people are all new; even the stock company has been released. The bill for the week is headed by the Sa-Vans, Charles and Minnie, who introduce several sensational feats in head-balancing. Frank Williamson has a black face turn, while Irvine and Ernie will take long chances in the air on rings and trapeze. Pauline Scott, well-known to luridous lovers, will be seen in her specialties. Song and dance teams are numerous and of varying degrees of excellence. There are the Lake sisters, Denna, Murphy and Link and Kitty Browning. Annie Duval is said to sing ballads pleasingly. Jones and La Pez are really clever, and do a comedy sketch which acclimates with a wit more refined than usual for such acts. The bill opens with "The American Vagabonds," and closes with "The Spider and the Web." All in all, the offering for the week gives promise of considerable merit.

Gossip of the Stage.

Sarah Bernhardt was recently asked to what she attributed her vocation for the theatre, whereupon Sarah became ecstatic and told the questioner that it was to the church and to the church alone that she owed her calling. Her youth was intoxicated by the music and the pomp of the liturgy, as by the solemn silence which prevailed while the preacher was in the pulpit, and at times she felt as if she were transfigured and was ascending direct to heaven.

Waiter L. Main, proprietor of Main's Monster Railway Shows, has just engaged S. H. Senon, business manager of the Spider & Fly company, as contracting agent for the coming tenting season. Mr. Senon has been connected with the Forepaugh show for the past fifteen years. Mr. Main has certainly secured a valuable assistant on his business staff.

Fred C. Whitney and Colonel Mapleson have severed connections, and as a result Laura Mapleson will not sing the leading role in "The Fighting Master" after December 10, when Lily Post, her rival, will assume the honors. The doughty "Colonel" says he will produce "La Petite Marie," Leeco's tuneful opera in New York in January.

From Chicago comes the intelligence that Modjeska played Fortia last week for the first time since appearing with Mr. Booth. Correct. When "The Merchant" was given in The Powers by that actress she insulted an audience by walking through the part. Modjeska made no attempt to play it.

The following are the excellent bookings of The Powers for December and January: "Lady Windermere's Fan," "Ben Hur," "Robin Hood," "Eight Belles," "The Girl I Left Behind Me," the Lyceum Theatre Stock company in a play yet to be decided on; DeWolf Hopper and Barlow Bros.

Patti has secured a one-act opera, "Aribelle," which she will sing in Chicago after the beginning of the new year. The score is by Pizzi, an American, many of the numbers recalling the Verdi of the olden days. The book is by Charles A. Byrne.

Elwyn A. Barron, the brilliant dramatic critic of the Inter Ocean, was one of the famous literary quartet, James Whitcomb Riley, Opie Read and Douglas Sherley, who delighted Chicagoans last week with readings from their own works.

Clay M. Greene, the librettist of "The Maid of Plymouth," which is one of the features of the Bostonian's repertoire, has married Augustus Thomas, author of "Alabama" and "In Mezzotone," to assist him in rewriting the book.

Irving's production of "King Henry VIII" in New York last week was the greatest scenic triumph achieved by the troupe in either this country or his own, with the possible exception of "The Devil Horse."

Leonard Richardson has overcome his financial difficulties and will soon present

in New York a novel theatrical spectacle to be called "Leonard Richardson's Illustrated Dramatic Weekly."

The Knickerbocker will open a Chicago engagement on Christmas day with "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." Manager's Xmas present from the Windy city critics will perhaps be unpleasant.

The sisters of the Methodist church in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa have condemned theatre-going, contending that it takes the thoughts of church members from heaven to earth.

Clement Scott, slosh of the London critics has failed to land. Ada Rehan's "Lady Treadwell" can it be possible that Mr. Scott and Augustin Daly have had a misunderstanding?

In Denver Thursday evening Robert Downing presented for the first time in English the tragedy of "Samson," in which Sigour Salvioli has been seen.

Henri Marteau, the violinist heard in Lockerby hall Thursday night, will play in Chicago with the Thomas orchestra January 18 and 19.

Manager Emerson has signed a contract to direct Nikita's American tour next year, opening the season in California in June.

The English Opera company disbanded in Buffalo Thursday night because the orchestra struck for back salary.

Mme. Tavery and her husband have gone to New York and will endeavor to reorganize the company.

Frank Lincoln is booked for Lockerby hall in January.

SPLENDID OPPORTUNITY.

An Offer Made by the Grand Rapids Chair Company That Should be Appreciated.

As will be seen in another column, the Grand Rapids Chair company makes an announcement that each resident of Grand Rapids and vicinity, should appreciate simply because it is on a subject of vital importance to all—that of home furniture. For many years past the company has been used by many people to place their goods on the market so as to enable the retail buyer to secure them at a nominal price. The company has long deliberated on this subject and at last decided to place their excellent productions on sale at prices that are so low that they are sure to come within the reach of all. Commencing on Monday morning and continuing to Saturday, December 23, the Grand Rapids Chair company will offer their entire line of goods at the firm's regular wholesale prices. When this grand offer is thoroughly realized. People will readily see that it is, so to speak, "The chance of a lifetime" to secure furniture at figures that are more than difficult to duplicate, they being so low. This is a new move by this well-known company, and one that should be heartily encouraged by a liberal support. The stock consists of dining, library and reception chairs, hall trees, hall seats and benches; lounge and settees; side beds and buffets; dressers and dressing tables; china closets and chiffoniers; music cabinets, ladies desks and fancy tables. It is unnecessary to go into details as regards the merits of the goods manufactured by the Grand Rapids Chair company, as their excellent qualities are too well known in this city. Christmas is rapidly approaching and with many joyful occasions come presents galore. What gift is more appropriate and useful than some article of furniture for the home is difficult to determine, but it is safe to say that presents this year in the form of furniture will be up near the van anyway, simply on account of the unusually low offer by the Grand Rapids Chair company. It will repay any one to at least look over the stock displayed at the factory. Take the Wealthy avenue and Taylor street electric car.

Duffy Competition.

Some of the Christmas Leaders offered at Heyman Company's this week. Look the list over:
Elegant solid mahogany center table, cut from \$12.50 to \$6.00.
Another worth \$25.00, for \$15.50.
Another worth \$18.50, for \$9.50.
And a dandy worth \$25.00, for \$14.50.
Combination book case \$20.00, cut to \$11.50.
Combination book case \$22.00, cut to \$11.50.

The above are only a few quotations of some of the really fine values given by Heyman Company. This firm is a progressive one and has jumped to the front ranks of house furnishers in the state. Their stock is an honest one, large and well assorted and in an honest city area much larger than Grand Rapids. No competitors are recognized in the state by this firm, they hold undisputed sway as the leaders. Seekers of Christmas presents should not pass the display made by Heyman Company unnoticed. In it rich and elegant gifts can be culled for prices that are lower even than those offered at a 14 off or a 15 off sale. Call this week and look over the goods.

There are numerous ribbon sales going on, but if you want to find the exact thing or the lowest price go to Corl, Knott & Co. They always have the thing you want in this line.

Unique Window Display.

The window display of the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company is a novel one, to say the least, and is attracting universal attention. The display represents a Christmas scene, the home of good, old Santa Claus, and the surroundings are such as to make one envious of the headquarters of this great person. The scene is, to say the least, an inspiring one. Commencing next Saturday evening, Santa Claus will hold daily and nightly receptions in the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company's window, at which time he will present to the firm's patrons "Baby's First Christmas," by all odds the handsomest panel ever given out by this popular concern. In conclusion, it would not be amiss to say the originator of this pretty window design is L. Elderson, the well-known manager of the company.

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Florida oranges at Harris', South Division street.

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Lady Windermere's Fan

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